

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4, 8, 10, 14-17, 20, 22, and 26-45 are pending in this application. By this amendment, Claims 2-4, 10, 16, 17, 22, 26-30, and 32-45 have been amended. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 2-4, 8, 14-17, 20, 26-28, 30, 31, 33-36, and 38-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suda (U.S. Patent No. 6,388,707 B1) in view of Hashimoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,972,799 B1) and Claims 10, 22, 29, 32, and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suda in view of Hashimoto and Kaite (U.S. Patent No. 4,614,975).

Claim 2 recites:

setting the first region initially at a first range and at a position within the imaging range, whereby a center of the first region is located at a center of the imaging range if the user designation is not received, and upon receiving the user designation, the center of the first region being located at specified coordinates and the range of the first region being set up is smaller than the first range, and upon receiving a further user designation, returning the center of the first region to the center of the imaging range and the range of the first region to the first range.

Claims 3, 4, 17, and 27 recite similar subject matter. It is respectfully submitted that these features are neither disclosed by nor rendered obvious by Suda, Hashimoto, Kaite or any conceivable combination thereof.

Suda describes an auto focus microcomputer that sets focus in a central portion and at a comparative large size, only when an error in detecting the line of sight has occurred.¹ Thus, as shown in FIG. 5(a), Suda sets the focus position and size of frame for nonline-of-

¹ See Abstract.

sight mode at the center of the frame in box S4 only when error detection decision box S3 determines that an error has occurred. Otherwise, Suda sets focus position based on the point of interest from line-of-sight detection in boxes S6 and S7. Further, in FIG. 7(a), Suda describes where an error has continued for a predetermined time, the set position and size of frame for nonline-of-sight mode is in the center of the frame in box S104. There is no description in Suda of setting the first region at a first range and at a position within an imaging range whereby a center of the first region is located at a center of the imaging range, upon receiving the user designation, the center of the first region being located at specified coordinates and the range of the first region being set up smaller than the first range, and upon receiving a further user designation, returning the center of the first position to the center of the imaging range and the range of the first region to the first range as recited in independent Claims 2, 3, 4, 17, and 27.

Hashimoto describes that when a release operation is performed, a CPU drives the focusing lens and operates the AF processor circuit at a high speed frame rate if the CPU determines, on the basis of brightness evaluation values from the AE processor circuit, that the brightness of the subject is equal to or higher than a predetermined brightness.

Hashimoto further describes that the CPU drives the focusing lens and operates the AF processor circuit with high precision at an ordinary frame rate if the CPU determines if the brightness of the subject is lower than the predetermined brightness. Accordingly, Hashimoto fails to correct the deficiencies of Suda pointed out above.

Kaite describes a focus area change circuit in which the sampling pulses or the expansion sampling pulses are selected in response to the state of the object of image formation thereby enabling selection of the focus area. Thus, Kaite fails to describe a line-of-sight detection. Accordingly, Kaite fails to correct the deficiencies of Suda and Hashimoto described above.

It is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 8, 10, 14-16, 20, 22, 26, and 28-45 are patentable at least for the reasons argued above with regard to the claims from which they depend.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of Claims 2-4, 8, 10, 14-17, 20, 22, and 26-45 be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that Claims 2-4, 8, 10, 14-17, 20, 22, and 26-45 be found allowable.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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